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- ☀
  ☾
- Home
- UPSC
  - Current Affairs IAS
  - करंट अफेयर्स फॉर आईएएएस
  - Quiz IAS
  - आईएएस के लिए प्रश्नोत्तरी
  - UPSC News Editorial (हिंदी /Eng)
  - Answer Writing (हिंदी /Eng)
  - UPSC Essay (हिंदी /Eng)
  - UPSC GS (हिंदी /Eng)
    - UPSC GS 1 (हिंदी /Eng)
    - UPSC GS-2 (हिंदी /Eng)
    - UPSC GS-3 (हिंदी /Eng)
    - UPSC GS-4 (हिंदी /Eng)
  - Kurukshetra (हिंदी /Eng)
  - Yojana (हिंदी /Eng)
  - IAS Strategy for Prelims
    - General Studies
    - UPSC CSAT Paper 2
  - IAS Strategy for Mains
    - IAS GS 1
    - IAS GS 2
    - IAS GS 3
    - IAS GS 4
  - IAS Test Series
- Himachal HPAS
  - Himachal Daily Current Affairs
  - हिमाचल नियमित समाचार
  - Daily Himachal GK Quiz

- दैनिक क्विज़ हिमाचल HPAS
- Himachal News Editorial (हिंदी /Eng)
- Answer Writing (हिंदी /Eng)
- Himachal Essay (हिंदी /Eng)
- Giriraj
    - Magazine
    - Giriraj Quiz
- गिरिराज
    - पत्रिका
    - गिरिराज प्रश्नोत्तरी
- HP Government Schemes
- हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार की योजनाएं
- Syllabus Prelims Himachal HPAS
    - GENERAL STUDIES
    - UPSC CSAT Paper 2
        - English
        - Hindi
- Syllabus Mains Himachal HPAS
    - English,Hindi,Essay & One Optional
    - HPAS GS 3
    - HPAS GS 2
    - HPAS GS 1
- Himachal HPAS Test Series
- All You need to Know about Himachal HPAS

- HARYANA HCS
    - Haryana Current Affairs
    - हरियाणा करेंट अफेयर्स
    - HCS Quiz
    - एचसीएस प्रश्नोत्तरी
    - Haryana News Editorial (हिंदी /Eng)
    - Answer Writing (हिंदी /Eng)
    - Haryana Essay (हिंदी /Eng)
    - HR Government Schemes
    - हरियाणा सरकार की योजनाएं
    - Syllabus Mains Haryana HCS
    - Syllabus Prelims Haryana HCS
    - HCS Prelims Test Series

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- Punjab PCS
  - Punjab PCS Current Affairs
  - Daily Quiz Punjab PCS
  - Punjab News Editorial (Eng)
  - Answer Writing (Eng)
  - Punjab Essay (Eng)
  - All you need to know about Punjab PCS Exam 2021
  - Syllabus Prelims Punjab PCS
    - General Studies
    - Prelims GS 1
  - Syllabus Mains Punjab PCS
    - PCS GS 1
    - PCS GS 2
    - PCS GS 3
    - PCS GS 4
    - Online PUNJAB PCS TEST SERIES 2020
- CSAT
  - CSAT English
  - □□□□□ □□□□□
- Concept Mindmaps
  - Polity (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Geography (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Enviroment (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - History (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Economics (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Science and Technology (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - CSAT Concepts (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Maps (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Art and Culture (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - International Affairs (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Punjab PCS Concepts
  - Himachal HPAS Concepts (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Haryana HCS Concepts (□□□□□ / Eng)
  - Rajasthan RAS Concepts (□□□□□ / Eng)
- Concept Quiz
  - Polity Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)

- Geography Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Enviroment Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- History Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Economics Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Science and Technology Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- CSAT Concepts Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Maps Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Art and Culture Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Punjab PCS Concepts Quiz
- Himachal HPAS Concepts Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Haryana HCS Concepts Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)
- Rajasthan RAS Concepts Quiz (□□□□□/Eng)

- Mains
  - UPSC Answer Writing (□□□□□/Eng)
  - HPPSC Answer Writing (□□□□□/Eng)
  - Haryana HCS Answer Writing (□□□□□/Eng)
  - Punjab PCS Answer Writing
- Exam Blogs
  - UPSC Exam Blogs
  - Himachal Exam Blogs
  - Punjab exam Blogs
  - Haryana Exam Blogs
  - Rajasthan Exam Blogs
  - E-Magazine
    - E-Magazine for HPAS
    - □□□□□□□□ □□ □□□ □-□□□□□□□□
    - E-Magazine for Punjab PCS
- UPCOMING EXAMS
  - National Exams
  - Himachal Pradesh Exams
  - Punjab Exams
  - Test Series Planner
- About US
- Sign Up
- Login
- facebook 

- instagram 
- youtube 

MENU
Click on Drop Down for Current Affairs

Topics Covered

-
    - Summary About Afar Triangle:
    - What is the news?
        - The Afar Triangle: A Geological Hotspot
        - A Window into Earth’s Internal Processes
        - A Slow and Gradual Birth
        - A Reshaped Africa and a New Ecosystem
        - A Glimpse into the Future
    - What are the Factors Responsible for Rift’s Expansion?
        - QuizTime:
        - Are you Ready!
- Read the Below Instructions Carefully:
    - Please Rate!
- Mains Questions:
    - Question 1:
    - Model Answer:
    - Question 2:
    - Model Answer:
    - Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:
    - Prelims:
    - Mains:

Summary About Afar Triangle:

- Geological Marvel: Located at the meeting point of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti.
- Tectonic Activity: Three plates (African, Arabian, and Somali) slowly pulling apart.
- Rifting Process: Ongoing rifting could create a new ocean basin.
- Impact: Potential split of the African continent in millions of years.
- Dynamic Earth: Reminds us that continents are constantly evolving.

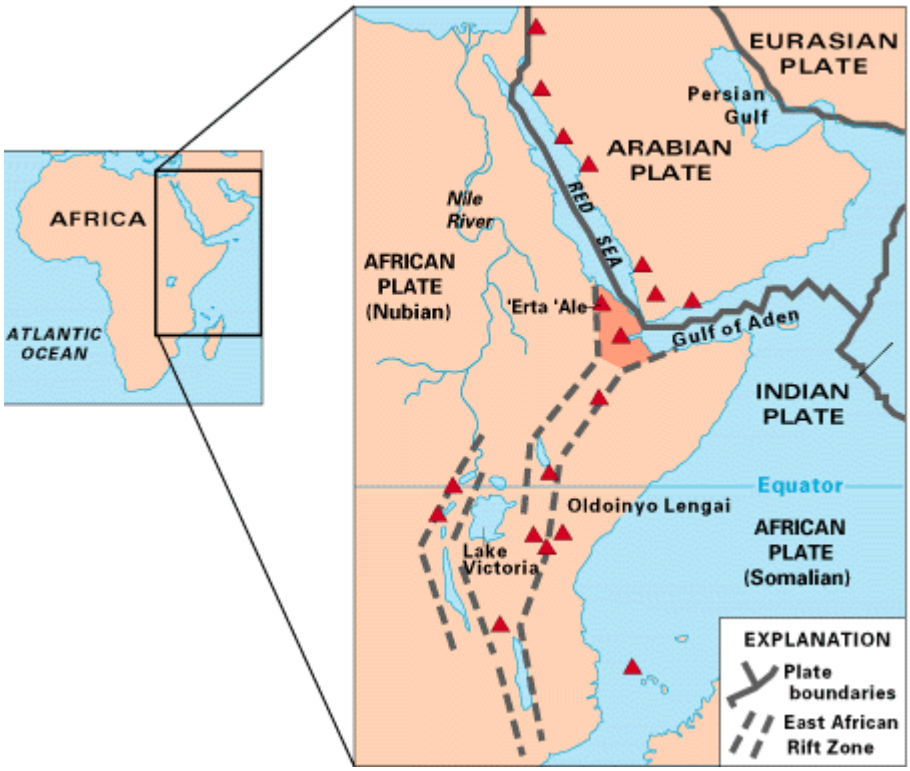
What is the news?

- The Earth's continents are not fixed landmasses, but dynamic entities constantly in motion. **Recent discoveries in Africa's Afar Triangle hint at a dramatic future – the potential birth of a new ocean.**

The Afar Triangle: A Geological Hotspot

- Located at the meeting point of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti, the Afar Triangle is a geological marvel.
- Here, three tectonic plates – the African (Nubian

Plate), Arabian, and Somali – are slowly pulling apart in a process called rifting. Fueled by this movement and the presence of a hot mantle plume, the region has become a vast depression, holding the title of Africa's lowest point.



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A Window into Earth's Internal Processes

- The Afar Triangle serves as a natural laboratory, offering scientists a glimpse into the dynamic forces shaping our planet. The visible rifts and volcanic activity stand as testaments to the immense power churning beneath the Earth's surface. Studying this region allows us to understand continental drift, the formation of new

oceans, and the evolution of landscapes over millions of years.

A Slow and Gradual Birth

- Current geological activity suggests that, over the next 5 to 10 million years, the ongoing rifting could lead to the formation of a new ocean basin. This wouldn’t be a sudden event, but a gradual process. The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden would likely expand and merge, flooding the Afar region and eventually splitting the African continent in two. This nascent ocean could be called the “Alvor-Teide Atlantic Rift,” reflecting its connection to the existing mid-ocean ridge system.

A Reshaped Africa and a New Ecosystem

- The birth of a new ocean would have far-reaching consequences. Africa’s geography would be dramatically altered, creating a new continent on the eastern side. Climate patterns would be impacted, potentially affecting rainfall and wind circulation. This new ocean basin could also foster the emergence of unique marine ecosystems, enriching the planet’s biodiversity.

A Glimpse into the Future

- While millions of years away, the ongoing processes in the Afar Triangle offer a glimpse into the dynamism of our planet. Studying this region allows us to not only understand Earth's history but also anticipate its future. The Afar Triangle serves as a reminder that continents are not permanent, but constantly evolving and reshaping the world we live in.

What are the Factors Responsible for Rift's Expansion?

- The Afar Triangle in Africa sits where two giant slabs of land (tectonic plates) are slowly pulling away from each other. Imagine it like a crack in the Earth's crust that's getting wider.

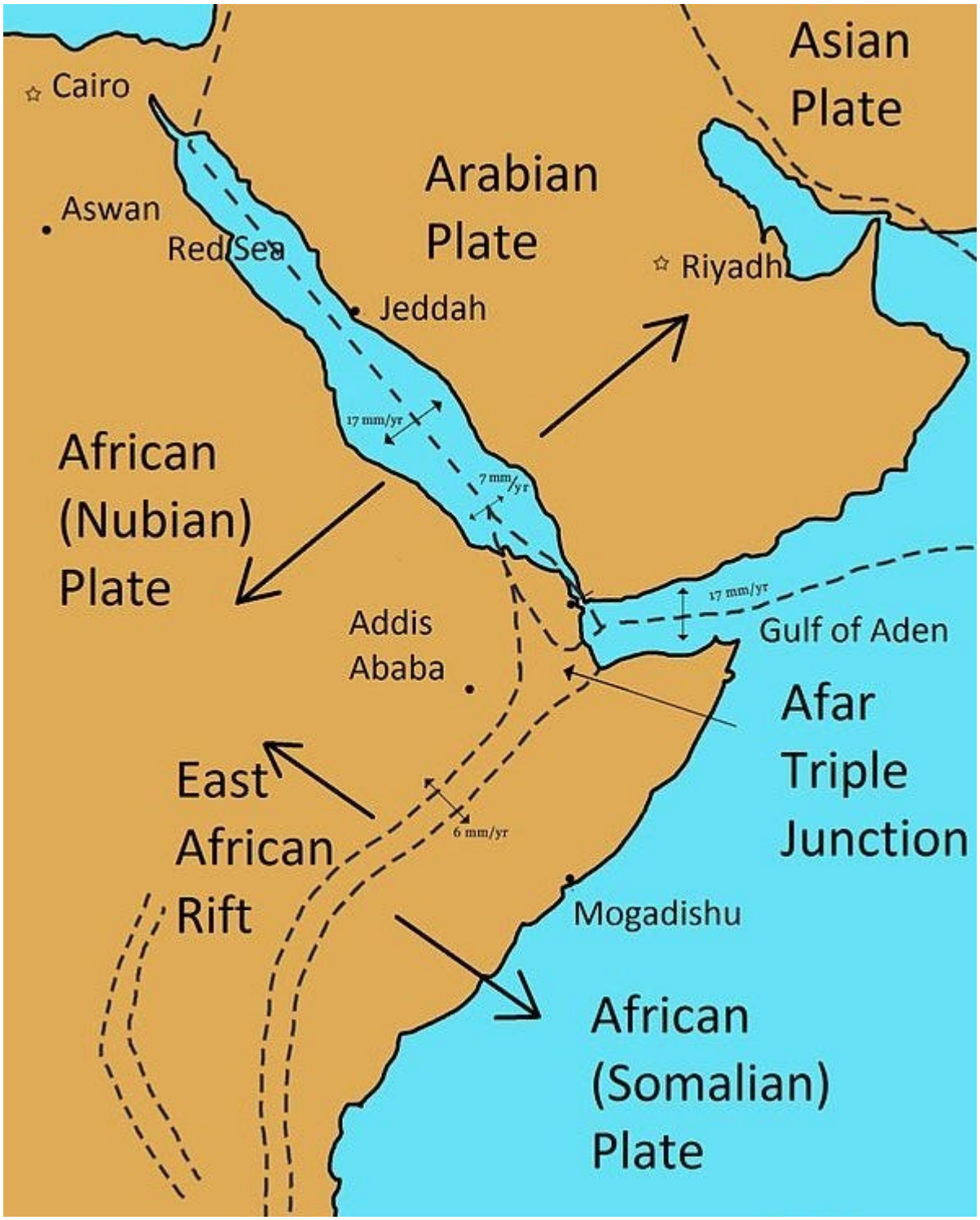
This widening crack is caused by two things:

- Moving Plates: The tectonic plates are constantly on the move, and in the Afar Triangle, they're pulling apart. This stretching thins the Earth's crust in the rift valley.
- Hotspot Below: Underneath the Afar Triangle is a hot zone in the Earth's mantle. This hot area weakens the crust above it, making it easier for the stretching forces to pull it apart. The

presence of volcanic eruptions in the area, notably at the Erta Ale volcano, provides insights into the tectonic shift, exhibiting traits reminiscent of a mid-ocean ridge.

Over millions of years, this stretching and thinning could lead to a dramatic change:

- **Seawater Fills the Gap:** As the rift valley widens, seawater from nearby areas like the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden could seep in, slowly filling the gap.
- **Ocean Floor Forms:** In the center of the rift, a new undersea mountain range (mid-ocean ridge) might form due to volcanic activity. This ridge would constantly push the plates further apart.
- **A New Ocean Emerges:** Eventually, millions of years from now, the rift valley could become so wide and deep that it transforms into a full-fledged ocean basin. The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden might even merge with this new ocean, splitting Africa into two continents.



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So, the Afar Triangle is a window into the future. It shows us how continents can slowly drift apart and even create entirely new oceans over vast stretches of time.

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General Studies

CURRENT AFFAIRS QUIZ

Read the Below Instructions

Carefully:

- Click on - Start Quiz
- Attempt all questions (You can attempt or leave)
- After Attempting Last Question.
- Enter Name & Email
- Click on - Check Result
- Scroll down - Check out Solutions too.

Thank you.

Loading ...

1 / 5

Category: **General Studies**

The Afar Triangle in Africa is a region experiencing ongoing rifting. What is the PRIMARY factor contributing to this rifting?

- ○ Erosion by wind and water
- ○ Movement and divergence of tectonic plates
- ○ Impact of a large meteorite
- ○ Volcanic activity alone

Prev Finish Next

2 / 5

Category: **General Studies**

Studying the Afar Triangle is significant because it allows scientists to:

- ○ Predict future earthquakes with high accuracy

○ Understand the process of continental drift

○ Locate potential sources of new mineral resources

○ Develop new technologies for geothermal energy production

Prev Finish Next

3 / 5

Category: **General Studies**

The formation of a new ocean in the Afar Triangle, if it occurs, would most likely:

○ Cause a sudden and catastrophic flooding event

○ Be a gradual process taking millions of years

○ Lead to a decrease in volcanic activity in the region

○ Significantly cool down the global climate

Prev Finish Next

4 / 5

Category: **General Studies**

The potential new ocean in the Afar Triangle might be named:

○ The Great Rift Sea

○ The Afar Ocean

○ The Alvor-Teide Atlantic Rift

○ The Arabian Sea Extension

Prev Finish Next

5 / 5

Category: **General Studies**

The potential birth of a new ocean in Africa could

have the following consequences on the continent:

I. Creation of a new landmass on the eastern side
II. Altered climate patterns with changes in rainfall and wind circulation

- ○ Only 1
- ○ Only 2
- ○ Both
- ○ None

Prev Finish

Check Rank, Result Now and enter correct email as you will get Solutions in the email as well for future use!

Check the Result

Your score is

0%

Restart quiz

Please Rate!

Send feedback

Mains Questions:

Question 1:

The Afar Triangle in Africa is a unique geological hotspot with ongoing rifting processes. Explain the factors driving this rifting and how the formation of a new ocean in this region could potentially impact Africa's geography and climate.(250 words)

Model Answer:

The rifting in the Afar Triangle is driven by two key factors:

- Tectonic Plate Movement: Three tectonic plates (African, Arabian, and Somali) are pulling apart at this junction. This stretching thins the Earth's crust and creates the rift valley.
- Mantle Plume Activity: A hot plume of molten rock from the Earth's mantle weakens the crust above the Afar Triangle, making it more susceptible to rifting caused by plate movement.
- The formation of a new ocean in this region would

significantly alter Africa's geography. The continent could be split in two, creating a new landmass on the eastern side. This transformation might also impact climate patterns, potentially influencing rainfall and wind circulation in the region.

Question 2:

The Afar Triangle offers valuable insights into the dynamic processes shaping the Earth. Discuss the significance of studying this region and how it helps us understand the long-term evolution of continents and oceans.(250 words)

Model Answer:

The Afar Triangle serves as a natural laboratory, allowing scientists to study the forces shaping our planet's geography in real-time. The visible rifts and volcanic activity demonstrate the immense power at play beneath the Earth's surface. Studying this region provides insights into:

- Continental Drift: The movement of tectonic plates pulling apart in the Afar Triangle reflects continental drift, a theory explaining the movement of continents over millions of years.
- Formation of New Oceans: The ongoing rifting process showcases the initial stages of new ocean

formation, offering valuable knowledge about how oceans come into existence.

- Evolution of Landscapes: Studying the Afar Triangle helps us understand how landscapes change over vast timescales due to geological processes like rifting and volcanic activity.

By studying the Afar Triangle, we gain a deeper understanding of the Earth's dynamic nature and how continents and oceans evolve over millions of years. This knowledge can be applied to other geological phenomena and even predict future changes in our planet's geography.

Remember: These are just sample answers. It's important to further research and refine your responses based on your own understanding and perspective. Read entire UPSC Current Affairs.

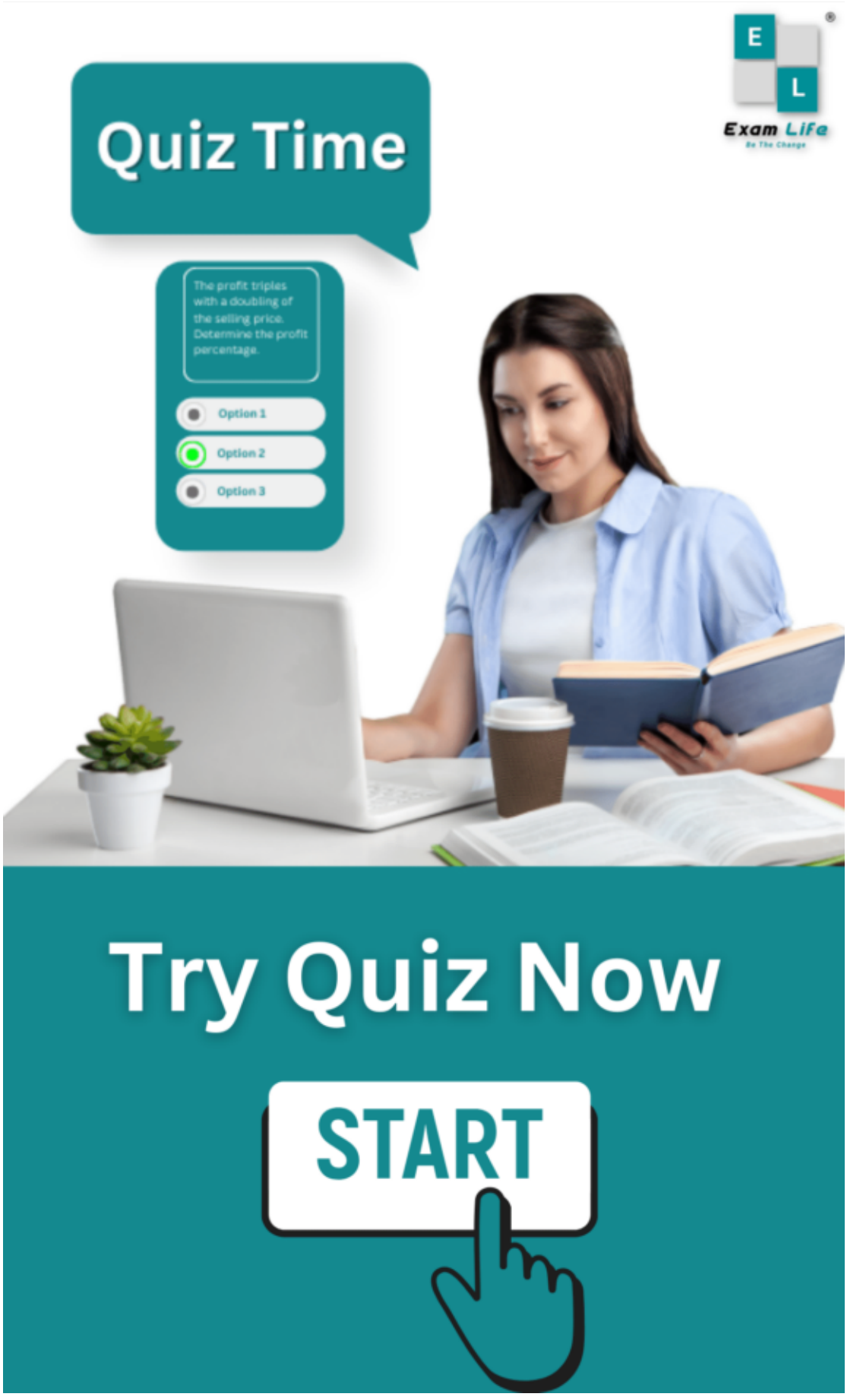
Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:

Prelims:

- **GS (paper 1): Geography:** "Basics of the Earth's structure and composition"

Mains:

- **Geography:** “Basics of the Earth’s structure and composition”
- **Geology Optional Syllabus:**
- General Geology: This section covers topics like plate tectonics, continental drift, and seafloor spreading. Understanding the Afar Triangle’s rifting process and potential ocean formation aligns with these concepts.
- Structural Geology: This section deals with the deformation of the Earth’s crust, including processes like rifting and faulting. Studying the Afar Triangle helps illustrate these concepts.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Option 1
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